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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

4 December 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Allan Evans (OIR)
Colonel Gerald F. Lillard, USA (G-2)
Captain Allan L. Reed, USN (ONI)
Colonel Jack E. Thomas, USAF (AFOIN-2A)
Captain John A. Holbrook, USN (JIG)

SUBJECT : Supplement to NIE-64 (Part I): Soviet Bloc
Capabilities Through Mid-1954

1. The attached draft is forwarded for your consideration. It has been prepared in this form primarily to expedite coordination. It is anticipated that at least the revised Conclusions agreed upon by the IAC will be presented to the NSC Senior Staff in different form.

2. As we have previously pointed out, it is essential that this estimate be ready for consideration by the IAC on 11 December.

3. We therefore request that your representative meet with us on this text at 2:00 Monday, 8 December, in Room 146 South Building.

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Executive Secretary

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

4 December 1952

SUBJECT: NIE-64 (Part I) SUPPLEMENT: SOVIET BLOC CAPABILITIES,
THROUGH MID-1954^{1/}

THE PROBLEM

To extend through mid-1954 certain key estimates of Soviet Bloc^{2/} capabilities for political and military warfare made in NIE-64 (Part I).

ESTIMATE

I. CONCLUSIONS (Paragraphs 1-11).

The present conclusions can be projected through the period of this estimate, with the exception of paragraphs 10 and 11 which have

^{1/} Changes in the original text of NIE-64 (Part I) are indicated by the underlined text of this Supplement. Deletions have been bracketed.

^{2/} The Soviet Bloc consists of the USSR, the European Satellites, Communist China, Outer Mongolia, North Korea, and Viet Minh. The Kremlin also controls the international Communist movement outside the Bloc countries.

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been replaced by three new paragraphs on Bloc political warfare capabilities. Paragraph 4 has been expanded to include Soviet atomic and thermonuclear capabilities through mid-1954. The conclusions should read as follows:

- (1.) The Bloc continues to possess a significant quantitative superiority over the Western Powers in forces in being and in conventional ground and air armament.
- (2.) The Soviet economy is much better prepared now to support a major war effort than it was in 1940.
- (3.) The principal emphasis of the recent Bloc military program has apparently been upon enlarging the atomic stockpile and upon improving Bloc defenses, particularly against air attack. We believe that this emphasis will continue throughout the period of this estimate. We also believe that the Bloc military forces will not increase greatly in size, although they will improve in combat effectiveness.

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- (4.) We estimate that the USSR will probably have a stockpile of 190 atomic weapons (30-100 kiloton yield) by mid-1954. (The actual figure may be from half to twice as many as this estimate.) It is unlikely that the USSR will be able to develop and produce a thermonuclear weapon by mid-1953. However, we believe that the USSR will continue to make progress toward a thermonuclear weapon and that field testing concerned with thermonuclear reactions may take place by mid-1954.
- (5.) The Soviet forces now stationed in Eastern Europe are in an advanced state of readiness for war and can attack with little or no warning.
- (6.) We estimate that the Bloc has the capability to undertake concurrent large-scale operations in continental Europe, the Middle East, and mainland Asia. The Bloc could rapidly reinforce with Chinese Communist and Soviet forces the Communist forces now in Korea, and at the same time undertake an invasion of Japan by Soviet forces.

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- (7.) The USSR has the capability of undertaking sustained air offensives against the UK, most of continental Europe, most of the Middle East, and Japan, with the intensity of individual offensives varying according to the number of offensives undertaken simultaneously. It is also capable of undertaking the delivery of its full stockpile of atomic weapons against targets in these areas and against targets in the US and its overseas bases.
- (8.) The Bloc air defense organization has the capability for vigorous opposition to an air offensive against the principal Soviet centers. However, despite marked improvements in the Bloc air defense system (especially in the USSR, Eastern Germany, Poland, Europe, and Manchuria), deficiencies will remain throughout the period of this estimate.
- (9.) The USSR has the capability to undertake offensive submarine patrols and mining operations along most of the world's strategically vital sea lanes. The USSR has the capability to undertake short-haul amphibious operations in the seas adjacent to its own coasts.

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(10.) Bloc political warfare will continue to constitute a serious danger to the non-Communist world through mid-1954. The likelihood of an increase in Bloc political warfare capabilities is greatest in unstable areas, such as the Middle East and Southeast Asia. These areas will be particularly vulnerable to Bloc political warfare because of economic and social unrest, the widespread sentiment against "Western imperialism," and the ineffective leadership of the existing governments.

(11.) Within the Middle East, Bloc political warfare capabilities are greatest in Iran. The Iranian situation contains so many elements of instability that it is impossible to estimate with confidence for more than a short period few months.^{1/} However, we believe that the Bloc agent in Iran, the Tudeh Party, will not be able is not likely^{1/} to gain control of the government by infiltration or to develop the strength to overthrow the National Front by constitutional means or by force through 1953. Unexpected events, such as a serious crop failure or a split in the

^{1/} This paragraph is essentially a condensation of paragraphs 1 and 3 of NIE-75, "Probable Developments in Iran Through 1953" (13 November 1952, pp. 7). The footnotes indicate revisions which the Board considers to be a more accurate statement of the actual situation.

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National Front as a result of rivalry among its
leaders, would increase Tudeh capabilities greatly.
If present trends in Iran continue unchecked beyond
the end of 1953, rising internal tensions and continued
deterioration of the economy and of the budgetary position
of the government [might] are likely^{1/} to lead to a
breakdown of governmental authority and open the way
for at least a gradual assumption of control by Tudeh.

(11a.) We believe that during the period of this estimate Bloc
political warfare capabilities in Southeast Asia will
be largely determined by the degree of military pressure
which the Viet Minh forces, with Communist Chinese advice
and military assistance, bring to bear against the French
and the Associated States in Indochina. While the
odds now are against a decisive shift in the political
and military balance of forces in Indochina, these odds
may shift rapidly, particularly if the military capabilities
of the non-Communist forces are substantially weakened.
A Communist victory in Indochina would probably result in

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Communist control, by force or accomodation, of most or all of the Southeast Asian mainland countries, although not necessarily within the period of this estimate.

II. FACTORS AFFECTING BLOC CAPABILITIES (Paragraphs 12-22).

This section remains generally valid for the period through mid-1954. The significant additions and revisions necessary to project the estimate to mid-1954 are as follows:

12. (Paragraph 15a). Since World War II, the USSR has given high priority to modern electronic and communication systems. Soviet research and development in these fields are comparable to those of the US or of the UK. At the present time, the USSR: (a) is augmenting its extensive early warning network with modern GCI radar which is probably equivalent in performance to US operational equipment; (b) has operational quantities of shipboard and antiaircraft fire control equipment utilizing radar; (c) has, in limited operational use, blind bombing radar equipment; (d) has, at least in

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the experimental stage, a long-range hyperbolic navigation system; and (e) can produce limited operational quantities of proximity fuze anti-aircraft ammunition. The USSR has developed a very high capability for jamming radio transmissions up to and including HF bands. Soviet capabilities in related electronic fields indicate that they are now capable of developing equipment for jamming VHF and UHF bands. These capabilities constitute an increasingly serious threat to Western long-range (and short-range military/ radio communication and navigation systems and will by mid-1954 include the ability to interfere with short-range systems.^{1/}

13. (Paragraph 15b). We estimate that by mid-1954 the USSR will have in operational use a long-range hyperbolic navigation system and limited operational quantities of some type of airborne intercept equipment.^{2/} The USSR may also have both passive and active electronic countermeasures equipment for use

^{1/} With the exception of the underlined sections, the last three sentences of this paragraph were taken from NIE-64 (Part I), Appendices, "Appendix A, paragraph 24-c-3."

^{2/} Air Force may take a dissent.

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against most currently operational types of Western radars. Soviet conversion to VHF equipment in aircraft units is underway and might be operationally completed by mid-1954; by that time, a substantial proportion of the Soviet air defense communications network could be converted to a UHF system, provided this latter project were given sufficient priority.

14. (Paragraph 16). The gross national product of the Bloc has been increasing rapidly in the past few years. Any calculation of its magnitude is necessarily subject to considerable error, and no meaningful comparison can be made with prewar years for the Bloc as a whole. However, we estimate that the Bloc's gross national product in 1951 was roughly [15] 20 percent higher than in 1949, and that rapid growth will continue during the period of this estimate.

a. The economy of the USSR had recovered its prewar level of total production by 1948 and had surpassed that level by [an estimated 20-30 percent] at least.

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one-third in 1951. We estimate that the Soviet gross national product [is] has been increasing at an annual rate of [6-7] about 11 percent, and that it will continue to increase, although at a somewhat reduced rate, during the period of this estimate.

b. The combined production of the Satellites constitutes approximately one-quarter of the Bloc's gross national product. We believe that the Satellite gross national product [has increased since 1949, but we are unable to estimate the amount of the increase] will increase at a rate approximating that of the USSR during the period of this estimate.

c. The gross national product of Communist China is extremely difficult to estimate, but we believe that it represents less than 15 percent of the Bloc total. Communist China's gross national product is probably increasing at an annual rate of 3 to 5 percent, but its output of capital goods will continue to be a very small part of the Bloc total.

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15. (Paragraph 17). The output of the Soviet economy does not approach that of the US economy, nor does the output of the Bloc economy as a whole compare with approach that of the NATO states. USSR gross national product in 1951 was about one-quarter that of the US, and the combined gross national product of the entire Bloc was about 30 percent that of the NATO countries. However, these disparities are being reduced, but there will be no significant change by mid-1954.

16. (Paragraph 19). Since the end of World War II, the Bloc as a whole has devoted a much larger proportion of its gross national product to military purposes than the West. We estimate that the quantity of productive resources which the USSR will devote is allocating to military production in 1952 will equal equals the amount assigned in 1944, the peak year of Soviet war production. We believe that the USSR now devotes and will continue to devote about one-fifth of its gross national product to military expenditures.

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III. BLOC MILITARY STRENGTH (Paragraphs 23-28).

This section remains generally valid for the period through mid-1954. The significant additions and revisions necessary to project the estimate to mid-1954 are as follows:

17. (Paragraph 24). We estimate that the Bloc armed forces by mid-1954 will probably have:
 - a. Approximately 9,400,000 men, of which about 4,520,000 will be Soviet; 2,000,000 Satellite; 2,450,000 Chinese Communist; 300,000 North Korean; and 130,000 Viet Minh.
 - b. An authorized strength of about 26,700 aircraft, including about 13,000 jet fighters, 1,250 piston medium bombers, and possibly a few jet medium bombers. (Repeat footnote 3 on page 4 of original text.)
 - c. A total of approximately 260 major surface vessels^{1/} and 471 submarines, including 153 long-range types.

^{1/} This includes all naval vessel types down to and including coastal destroyers.

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- d. A stockpile of 190 atomic weapons (30-100 kiloton yield). (The actual figure may be from half to twice as many as this estimate.)
18. (Paragraph 25). It is unlikely that the USSR will be able to develop and produce a thermonuclear weapon by mid-1953. However, we believe that the USSR will continue to make progress toward a thermonuclear weapon and that field testing concerned with thermonuclear reactions may take place by mid-1954.
19. (Paragraph 26). The over-all effectiveness of Bloc ground, naval, and air forces will increase by mid-1953 mid-1954 because of progressive modernization and standardization of weapons and equipment, the intensive training program, the growth of the Soviet atomic stockpile, and the increased combat efficiency of the Satellite armies.
20. (Paragraph 28). The USSR maintains a large air defense system which not only includes the forces assigned to the Soviet air defense organization (PVO-Strany) but also

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has available to it the active air defense resources of the Army, tactical air forces, and Navy not otherwise committed, as well as the passive defense resources of the police and civilian organizations. The European Satellite and Communist Chinese air defenses add to and are integrated with the Soviet system. Despite significant improvements in the air defense system, there will probably continue to be insufficient numbers of trained and experienced pilots and operators, modern radar, heavy AA guns, and fighters designed specifically for all-weather interception to provide defense for all important areas. We estimate that by mid-1953 mid-1954 the numerical strength of the air defense forces will not change/increase substantially, although the effectiveness of the air defenses will improve through re-equipment and training.

IV. BLOC MILITARY CAPABILITIES (Paragraphs 29-37).

This section remains generally valid for the period through mid-1954. The significant additions and revisions necessary to project the estimate to mid-1954 are as follows:

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21. (Paragraph 32). The Bloc air defense organization has the capability for vigorous opposition to an air offensive against the principal Soviet centers. However, despite marked improvements in the Bloc air defense system (especially in the USSR, Eastern Germany, Poland/ Europe, and Manchuria), deficiencies will remain throughout the period of this estimate.
22. (Paragraph 36). Since the beginning of the Korean war, the Communist Air Force in China, which is v believed to be made up of Chinese Communist, North Korean, and Soviet elements, has been built to an impressive size. The jet fighter units in the Korea-Manchuria-North China area are believed to be progressively improving. However, The capabilities of the CAF in China are will remain during the period of this estimate through mid-1953 largely limited to the air defense of North China, Manchuria, and North Korea under conditions of good visibility and to limited attacks against UN forces in Korea and adjacent waters. However, we estimate that by mid-1954 the

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capabilities of this air force to extend its offensive operations beyond the present limited theater of operations will increase as a result of the introduction of jet light bombers.^{1/} We believe that the CAF in China will continue to expand gradually during the period of this estimate but will remain entirely dependent upon the USSR for aircraft and equipment, spare parts, and technical supervision, and almost entirely dependent upon the USSR for aviation fuel and lubricants. Unless some type of jet light bombardment aircraft is introduced, the offensive capabilities of this air force will remain extremely limited.^{2/} Redeployment from the Manchuria area would be necessary for sustained air operations against Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

V. BLOC POLITICAL WARFARE CAPABILITIES (Paragraphs 42-52)

This section is not valid for the period through mid-1954. Paragraphs 42-52 are replaced by the following paragraphs:

23. (Paragraph 42). Bloc political warfare will continue to constitute a serious danger to the non-Communist

^{1/} We have asked the Air Force for a clarification of this estimate.

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world through mid-1954. The likelihood of an increase in Bloc political warfare capabilities is greatest in unstable areas, such as the Middle East and Southeast Asia. These areas will be particularly vulnerable to Bloc political warfare because of economic and social unrest, the widespread sentiment against "Western imperialism," and the ineffective leadership of the existing governments.

24. (Paragraph 43). Within the Middle East, Bloc political warfare capabilities are greatest in Iran. The Iranian situation contains so many elements of instability that it is impossible to estimate with confidence for more than a /short period/ few months.^{1/} However, we believe that the Bloc agent in Iran, the Tudeh Party, /will not be able/ is not likely^{1/} to gain control of the government by infiltration or to develop the strength to overthrow the National Front by constitutional means or by force through 1953. Unexpected events, such as a serious crop failure or a split in the National Front as a result of rivalry among its leaders, would increase Tudeh capabilities greatly. If present trends in Iran continue unchecked

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beyond the end of 1953, rising internal tensions and continued deterioration of the economy and of the budgetary position of the government ~~might~~ are likely
to lead to a breakdown of governmental authority and open the way for at least a gradual assumption of control by Tudeh.

25. (Paragraph 44). We believe that during the period of this estimate Bloc political warfare capabilities in Southeast Asia will be largely determined by the degree of military pressure which the Viet Minh forces, with Communist Chinese advice and military assistance, bring to bear against the French and the Associated States in Indochina. While the odds now are against a decisive shift in the political and military balance of forces in Indochina, these odds may shift rapidly, particularly if the military capabilities of the non-Communist forces are substantially weakened. A Communist victory in Indochina would probably result in Communist control, by force or accommodation, of most or all of the Southeast Asian mainland countries, although not necessarily within the period of this estimate.

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